

STATEMENT OF SENATOR JOHN McCAIN
CHAIRMAN, SENATE COMMITTEE ON
COMMERCE, SCIENCE, AND TRANSPORTATION
FULL COMMITTEE HEARING
ON NOMINATIONS TO FEDERAL AVIATION MANAGEMENT ADVISORY COUNCIL
MAY 4, 2000

- C Today's hearing is on eight of the President's nominations to the Federal Aviation Management Advisory Council. The candidates before the Committee are intended to represent a broad cross-section of the aviation industry. If confirmed by the Senate, they will constitute an Advisory Board for the FAA Administrator. I want to thank our witnesses for their time today.
- C The Federal Aviation Management Advisory Council was authorized by Congress in the 1996 FAA reauthorization bill. The legislation required the President to appoint 11 aviation experts to the Management Advisory Council, to serve alongside a Department of Transportation official and a Department of Defense official. The recently-enacted Wendell H. Ford Aviation Investment and Reform Act for the 21st Century added five additional members to the Council, who will focus exclusively on the FAA's management and modernization of the air traffic control system. The Subcommittee members will have no ties to any particular segment of the aviation industry.
- C The main purpose of the Management Advisory Council is to help formulate, and to support and oversee the FAA's goals and strategies. Like a corporate Board of Directors, the Council is expected to hold the FAA Administrator accountable for meeting goals on time and living within budgetary guidelines. Using their collective management expertise, the members of the Management Advisory Council can and should help the Administrator respond to repeated calls to operate the FAA more like a service business.
- C I should underscore the fact that the FAA Administrator retains the final authority on all matters within the FAA's jurisdiction, since aviation safety has been and must be the paramount mission of the agency. As such, the direct powers of the Management Advisory Council are intentionally limited.
- C The substantive issues the nominees' will face are challenging. The FAA needs to do a better job of managing labor and air traffic control modernization costs during a time of enormous growth in aviation. Congress has provided the FAA with a nearly unprecedented boost in funding to provide the infrastructure necessary to accommodate increased air traffic. Yet even today, non safety-related delays severely hamper an already overburdened system. The FAA

must take the lead in returning air travel to a predictable and convenient mode of transportation that our economy has come to depend on.

- C The Committee recognizes that the task at hand is daunting. Even so, the members of the Council should not underestimate the power of the bully pulpit. The Administrator is required by law to justify publicly, in writing, his or decisions that break from the recommendations of the Management Advisory Council. I am convinced that bright sunlight is one of the strongest motivators of sound public policy.
- C In closing, I sincerely hope that the Administration's delay in sending up your nominations does not reflect on how well it will receive the scrutiny of the Management Advisory Council. It took more than three years for even the first nominations to come to the Committee.
- C I hope and expect that this timing issue is water under the bridge. I want the nominees to know that the Management Advisory Council has my full support in its endeavors. For your work to make a contribution will require an enormous amount of your time and patience. I thank you wholeheartedly for your willingness to serve. Please feel free to introduce any family members here, before you give your remarks.